

collected by Smith in the Prome District of Burma are those of *D. annectans* and constitute a record of its breeding in that area.

BRITISH MUSEUM (NAT. HIST.),  
CROMWELL ROAD,  
LONDON, SW. 7,  
*October 1, 1962.*

J. O. HARRISON

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#### 8. TAXONOMIC NOTES ON SOME HIMALAYAN PARIDAE

During the course of the Harvard-Yale Expedition (1957-59) to East and West Pakistan, India, and Nepal, sixteen forms of Paridae were collected. The following brief notes are based on a study of this collection.

##### **Parus melanolophus**

*Parus melanolophus*, ranging from extreme western Nepal to eastern Afghanistan, seems to be fairly constant in size throughout its distribution, with the exception of the population at the western terminus of its range. Vaurie's (1950) comparisons of worn adults from Afghanistan with similar birds from Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh suggest that the western birds may have longer wings and tails. Our series of late autumn specimens from West Pakistan also seem to indicate this. The flattened wings of 18 males from Kalam in Swat and from the Kaghan Valley in Hazara District range between 60.0 and 65.5 mm., with a mean and standard error of  $63.91 \pm .37$  mm.; the tails of these same birds range from 41.0 to 46.5 mm., with a mean of  $44.50 \pm .36$  mm. The wings of two males from the Safed Koh Mountains, on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, a few miles north of Parachinar, Kurram Agency, are 66.0 and 68.0 mm.; the tails of both specimens measure 48.0 mm. Ten females from Kalam and the Kaghan Valley have wings averaging  $61.20 \pm .53$  mm. and ranging between 58.0 and 63.5 mm., and tails from 40.0 to 46.5 mm., with a mean of  $42.85 \pm .60$  mm. A single female from near Parachinar has a wing of 66.0 mm. and a tail of 46.0 mm.

Therefore, except for the tail of the females, there is no overlap in the two characters measured.

Our three specimens from the Kurram Agency are slightly darker on the dorsum than a series of 34 birds collected during the same season in Hazara District and Swat.

Although it is almost certain that the westernmost population is morphologically distinct, it seems prudent to defer giving it a name until there is available more fresh material from the Safed Koh and Afghanistan.

#### **Parus major**

Two specimens of *Parus major* were obtained at Parachinar, Kurram Agency. Here one would expect to find *P. m. decolorans*, the race described from Jalalabad, Afghanistan, a locality on the other side of the Safed Koh from Parachinar, or *P. m. ziaratensis*, the form of northern Baluchistan<sup>1</sup> and southern Afghanistan. However, both specimens may be placed with *P. m. caschmirensis*. One is indistinguishable from a long series, collected in the same season and year, from Swat and Hazara District; the other is somewhat paler and may be approaching *P. m. ziaratensis*. I can find no support for including *P. m. decolorans* with the avifauna of Pakistan (*contra* Ripley, 1961).

#### **Parus spilonotus and Parus xanthogenys**

In recent years *Parus spilonotus* and *P. xanthogenys* have been considered to be conspecific (e.g. Vaurie, 1950; Biswas, 1953; Ripley, 1961), probably because they are somewhat similar morphologically, because they replace one another geographically, and also because their zone of contact is poorly known.

*P. xanthogenys*, the smaller form, with an unstreaked back and black head and forehead, ranges through higher elevations in peninsular India and in the Himalayas from Murree to eastern Nepal. The easternmost point at which it has been collected (Rand & Fleming, 1957) seems to be Manebhanjan (alt. 5000 ft.), a village lying a short distance north of Sun Kosi River and a few miles south of Okhaldhunga. Presumably it ranges even farther east since Ripley (1950) implies that he saw the species east of Arun Kosi River in Dhankutta District. The inclusion of Sikkim within the range of *P. xanthogenys* (e.g. Baker, 1922) is apparently an error, as has been pointed out by Whistler & Kinnear (1932).

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<sup>1</sup> Ripley (1961, p. 546) erroneously stated the Khagan Valley to be in Baluchistan, Khagan Valley birds are clearly *P. m. caschmirensis*.

*P. spilonotus*, a much larger bird with black streaks on the dorsum, a black head, and a yellow forehead, is distributed from extreme eastern Nepal through the eastern Himalayas and south-east Asia to Formosa. It has been collected (Stevens, 1923) in Nepal as far west as the Mai ('Khola') Valley (alt. 7000-8000 ft.), which is near the Indian border and less than 100 miles east of Manebhanjan and even closer to the Arun Kosi River.

While there is still no evidence of sympatry, the two forms occur only a short distance from one another. It appears that future collecting will almost certainly reveal that the populations slightly overlap, or at least abut. Perhaps the reason they have not yet been found sympatrically is the rarity of *P. spilonotus* at the western limits of its range. Stevens (1923) noted that the species is local and sparingly distributed in the Sikkim Himalayas, and during over two months spent collecting at altitudes from 1000 to 12,000 feet in the vicinity of Darjeeling, I observed only two individuals. One, a breeding male, was taken in late June at an altitude of 7200 feet and the other, a male with retrogressing testes, was collected in late July at 5400 feet.

The probability that *P. spilonotus* and *P. xanthogenys* are sympatric, albeit in a narrow belt, is doubtless reason enough for considering them different species. However, support for this belief may be found in two other areas of evidence: first, the fact that the taxa are morphologically very distinct, both in size and colour pattern; second, the failure of collectors to obtain any specimens that even suggest intergradation between the forms, which one would expect if these were allopatric subspecies.

Until there is evidence to the contrary, I believe one must treat *P. spilonotus* and *P. xanthogenys* as full species.

#### **Parus monticolus**

Three races of *Parus monticolus* have been described from the western part of the species, viz. nominate *P. monticolus*, with the type locality in the Simla-Almora region; *P. m. lepcharum* from Gangtok, Sikkim; and *P. m. yunnanensis*, with Milati, south-eastern Yunnan, as type locality.

The species shows a cline of increasing pigmentation from west to east; the races are distinguished only by this character. The cline is less steep in the eastern half of the range resulting in considerable difference in opinion as to whether *P. m. lepcharum*, the last named of the three western forms, is worthy of recognition. Stanford &

Ticehurst (1935) merged it with *P. m. monticolus*, as did Ludlow & Kinnear (1937); Vaurie (1950) at first treated it as distinct and later (1957; 1959) combined it with *monticolus*; Rand & Fleming (1957) maintained it separately, but with some doubt; Fleming & Traylor (1961) merged it with the nominate form, as did Ripley (1961).

I have examined a series of 50 newly-taken specimens from the western range of the species, including 13 winter birds from West Pakistan (as far west as Swat, which seems to be the limit of the species), 14 birds collected in December near Pokhara in central Nepal, and 23 moulting summer specimens from Darjeeling District. In addition I have seen 25 older specimens from India and Tibet and 23 skins from Yunnan, including the two syntypes of *P. m. yunnanensis*.

The west to east cline in coloration is distinct but slight, with the amount of pigmentation changing most rapidly in the western part of the cline. A series of fresh skins from West Pakistan can be separated quite readily from new material from central Nepal, although birds from western India are not so easily distinguished from Nepal specimens. The few specimens in good plumage I have seen from Darjeeling District, hence nearly topotypes of *P. m. lepcharum*, are very slightly darker on the dorsum than the central Nepal series and the yellow is somewhat less saturated than topotypic material of *P. m. yunnanensis*. With fresh specimens and long series there is no doubt that one might distinguish three races between West Pakistan and Yunnan. However, there seems no merit in naming the centre of a poorly marked cline. It appears to me, as it has to most recent students, that *P. m. lepcharum* should not be recognized. However, rather than merge it with nominate *P. m. monticolus*, as has been done consistently, I believe it better placed with *P. m. yunnanensis*, which it so closely resembles. Specimens from central Nepal also seem to fit better within *P. m. yunnanensis*. Thus, the distribution of *P. m. monticolus* should be defined as extending from Swat east to Nepal, where it merges with *P. m. yunnanensis*.

#### WEIGHTS OF SOME PARIDAE

Knowledge of the weights of birds is becoming increasingly important in taxonomic as well as biological studies. The following table places on record weight data for 16 forms of Asiatic Paridae:

TABLE

Weights of some adult Titmice from the Indian sub-continent

	Sex	No.	Mean	S <sub>x</sub>	Range	Locality
<i>P. rubidiventris rufonuchalis</i>	♂	13	13.14	.18	12.3-14.7	Hazara Dist. ; Swat
	♀	8	11.93	.12	11.4-12.4	
<i>P. rubidiventris beavani</i>	♂	9	12.21	.16	11.6-13.0	Darjeeling Dist.
	♀	5	11.38	.34	10.5-12.3	
<i>P. melanolophus</i>	♂	18	9.20	.09	8.3-9.8	Hazara Dist. ; Swat
	♀	10	8.85	.13	8.0-9.5	
<i>P. ater aemodius</i>	♂	5	8.16	.19	7.7-8.6	Darjeeling Dist.
	♀	3	7.56	.23	7.2-8.0	
<i>P. d. dichrous</i>	♂	3	12.90	.32	12-13.5	Darjeeling Dist.
	♀	4	12.10	.50	11.2-13.5	
<i>P. major nivalis</i>	♂	5	13.94	.18	13.4-14.5	vic. Pokhara, Nepal
	♀	2	12.70	..	12.6-12.8	
<i>P. major caschmirensis</i>	♂	17	15.60	.17	14.1-17.1	Hazara Dist. ; Swat
	♀	16	14.33	.20	13.2-16.2	
<i>P. monticolus yunnanensis</i>	♂	12	14.53	.16	13.5-16.8	Darjeeling Dist. ; vic. Pokhara, Nepal
	♀	10	13.57	.30	12.4-15.3	
<i>P. m. monticolus</i>	♂	8	13.68	.32	12.0-15.2	Hazara Dist. ; Swat
	♀	3	12.53	.24	12.3-13.0	
<i>P. x. xanthogenys</i>	♂	7	15.46	.34	13.7-16.3	vic. Pokhara, Nepal
	♀	6	14.36	.26	13.4-15.9	
<i>P. spilonotus</i>	♂	2	18.35	..	18.3-19.4	Darjeeling Dist.
<i>Melanochlora s. sultanea</i>	♀	1	36.3	..	..	Darjeeling Dist.
<i>Sylviparus m. modestus</i>	♂	6	7.52	.35	6.1-8.5	Darjeeling Dist. ; vic. Pokhara, Nepal
	♀	5	7.04	.25	6.2-7.8	
<i>Aegithalos leucogenys</i>	♂	4	6.88	.21	6.5-7.4	Hazara Dist.
	♀	3	6.70	.30	6.1-7.0	
<i>Aegithalos concinnus iredalei</i>	♂	2	8.75	..	8.5-9.0	Hazara Dist.
	♀	3	7.20	.29	6.7-7.7	
<i>Aegithalos concinnus rubricapillus</i>	♂	5	6.54	.15	6.0-6.9	Darjeeling Dist. ; vic. Pokhara, Nepal
	♀	5	6.44	.29	5.6-7.1	

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Nepal and the Zoological Surveys of Pakistan and India were most generous in granting us permission to collect. I am indebted to Dr. A. R. Ranjha, Officer-in-Charge of the Zoological Survey of Pakistan, for loaning several specimens in his care.

Mrs. Zeddie P. Bowen, Secretary to the Bird Department, assisted with the statistical calculations.

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August 8, 1962.

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## 9. OCCURRENCE OF THE WHITECAPPED BUNTING [*EMBERIZA STEWARTI* (BLYTH)] IN GUJARAT

During the field camp of the BNHS/WHO Bird Migration Study Project at Hingolgadh (Jasdan, Saurashtra) a single specimen of the Whitecapped Bunting, *Emberiza stewarti* (Blyth), was captured in a mist net. This bird has not so far been recorded from Gujarat, and seems to be a rare straggler from the western Himalayas and Baluchistan.